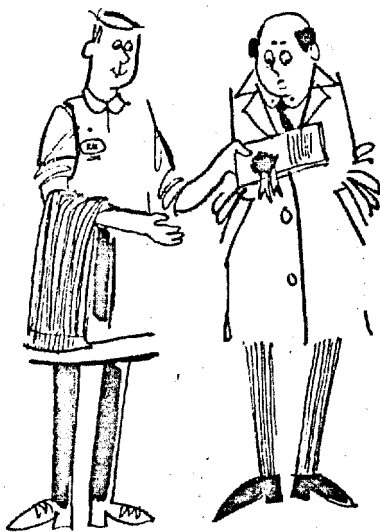


CPYRGHT



## LOOK WHO'S BEING TAKEN TO THE CLEANERS!

By ALLEN DULLES  
Former Director,  
Central Intelligence Agency

**When one spy was caught with his pants literally down, it was symbolic of the occasional fate of the world's secret agents, whose best-laid plans can be scrapped by blundering, absent-mindedness, or bizarre twists of fate.**

**I**N 1938 a soviet intelligence officer working under cover in the United States sent a pair of pants to the cleaners. In one of the pockets there was a batch of documents delivered by an agent employed in the office of naval intelligence. It was not easy to press the pants with the documents in the pocket so the pants presser removed them and in so doing brought to light one of the most flagrant cases of soviet espionage in American experience up to that time.

It was also one of the most flagrant instances of carelessness on the part of a trained intelligence officer on record. The officer, whose name was Gorin, was eventually returned to the Soviet Union, where he surely must have been shot for his sloppiness.

There have been some notorious cases of brief cases left behind in taxis or trains by people who should have known better. A sudden and inexplicable absent-mindedness can sometimes momentarily afflict a man who has been carefully trained in intelligence and security. But the gross mishap is usually not the fault of the intelligence officer. More often it results from the arbitrary or even the well-meaning behavior of outsiders who have no idea what the consequences of their acts may be, and from technical failures and from accidents.

The kind landlady of a rather busy roomer noticed that his spare pair of shoes was going thru at the soles. She took them to the cobbler's one day on her own. It was a favor. The cobbler suggested new heels also, removed the old ones, and discovered that in each was a hollow compartment containing some strips of paper covered with writing.

One of my most important German sources during my days in Switzerland in World War II almost had a serious mishap because his initials were in his hat. One evening he was dining alone with me in my house in Bern. My cook detected that we were speaking German. While we were enjoying her excellent food—she was a better cook than a spy—she slipped out of the kitchen, examined the source's hat, and took down his initials. The next day she reported to her nazi contact that a man, who from his speech was obviously German, had visited me and she gave his initials.

My source was the representative in Zurich of Admiral Canaris, head of German military intelligence. He frequently visited the German legation in Bern. When he next called there, a couple days after our dinner, two senior members of the legation, who had already seen the cook's report, took him aside and accused him of having contact with me. He was equal to the assault. Fixing the senior of them with his eyes, he sternly remarked that he had, in fact, been dining with me, that I was one of his chief sources of intelligence about allied affairs and that if they ever mentioned this to anyone, he would see to it that they were immediately removed from the diplomatic service. He added that his contacts with me were known only to Admiral Canaris and at the highest levels in the German government. They humbly apologized to my friend and, as far as I know, kept their mouths shut.

Everybody learned a lesson from this—I, that my cook was a spy; my German contact that he should remove his initials from his hat; and all of us that attack is the best defense and that if agent A is working with agent B, one sometimes never knows until the day of judgment who, after all, is deceiving whom. It was, of course, a close shave and only a courageous bluff saved the day. Fortunately, in this case my contact's bona fides were quickly established. The cook's activities eventually landed her in a Swiss jail.

### Ring Around Ritsu

The Sorge communist network in Japan was broken in 1942 as the result of an action which was not intended to accomplish this end at all. In fact, the person who caused the mishap knew nothing about Sorge or his ring.

Early in 1941, the Japanese began rounding up native Communists on suspicion of espionage. One of these, a cer-

Continued

tain Ito Ritsui, who had nothing to do with espionage, pretended to cooperate with the police while under interrogation by naming a number of persons as suspects who were basically harmless. One of those he named was a Mrs. Kitabayashi, who had once been a Communist but had forsaken communism while living in the United States and had become a Seventh-day Adventist. In 1936 she had returned to Japan and sometime later had been approached by another Japanese Communist she had known in the United States, an artist by the name of Miyagi, who was a member of the Sorge ring. Miyagi had thus exposed himself to Mrs. Kitabayashi needlessly, it seems, since she, as a teacher of sewing, could not have had access to any information of interest to Sorge. Ritsui knew nothing of all this. He apparently denounced Mrs. Kitabayashi out of malice, to get her into trouble, because she had ceased being a Communist. When the police arrested Mrs. Kitabayashi, however, she gave away Miyagi. Miyagi, in turn, led to one of the highly placed sources of Sorge, Ozaki, and so it went until the entire ring was rounded up.

It is of course true that the larger a network is with its many links and the need for communication between its various members, the greater are its chances of being discovered. Nevertheless, nothing that any of Sorge's very numerous and very active agents ever did aroused the attention of the police at any time. The officers who talked to Mrs. Kitabayashi couldn't have been more surprised when they were led, link after link, into one of the most effective espionage webs that ever existed. The discovery was purely the result of a mishap and one that no amount of careful planning could have avoided, except for just one precaution which the Soviets often failed to take: Don't use anyone in espionage who ever was known as a party member.

### Documentary Slips

The little slips or oversights which can give away the whole show may sometimes be the fault of the intelligence service itself, not of the officer handling the agent, but of the technicians who produce for the agent the material necessary to his mission—the false bottom of a suitcase that comes apart under the rough handling of a customs officer, a formula for secret writing that doesn't quite work. Forged documents are perhaps the greatest pitfall. Every intelligence service collects and studies new documents from all over the world and the modifications in old ones in order to provide agents with documents that are "authentic" in every detail and up to date. But occasionally there is a slip



*"She was a better cook than a spy."*

that couldn't be helped and an observant border official, who sees hundreds of passports every day, may notice that the traveler's passport has a serial number that doesn't quite jibe with the date of issue or a visa signed by a consul who just happened to drop dead two weeks before the date he was supposed to have signed it. Even the least imaginative border control officer knows that such discrepancies can point to only one thing. No one but the agent of an intelligence service would have the facilities working for him that are needed to produce such a document, which is artistically and technically perfect except in one unfortunate detail.

### Fate Steps In

Then there is fate, the unexpected intervention of impersonal forces, accidents, natural calamities, man made obstacles that weren't there the week before, or simply the perversity of inanimate things, the malfunctioning of machinery. An agent on a mission can drop dead of a heart attack, be hit by a truck, or take a plane that crashes. This may end the mission or it may do more. In March, 1941, Capt. Ludwig von der Osten, who had just arrived in New York to take over the direction of a network of nazi spies in the United States, was hit by a taxi while crossing Broadway at 45th street and fatally injured. Altho a quick-thinking accomplice managed to grab his brief case and get away, a notebook found on von der Osten's body and various papers in his hotel room pointed to the fact that he was a German masquerading as a Spaniard and undoubtedly involved in espionage

and the accident, postal censorship at Bermuda discovered a reference to the accident in some highly suspicious correspondence that had regularly been going from the United States to Spain, the FBI was able to get on the trail of the nazi spy ring von der Osten was to manage. In March of 1942, their work culminated in the trial and conviction of Kurt F. Ludwig and eight associates. It was Ludwig who had been with von der Osten when the taxi hit him and who had been maintaining the secret correspondence with nazi intelligence via Spain.

One windy night during the war a parachutist was dropped into France, who was supposed to make contact with the French underground. He should have landed in an open field outside the town but was blown off course and landed instead in the middle of the audience at an open-air movie. It happened to be a special showing for the SS troops stationed nearby.

The now famous Berlin tunnel which went from West to East Berlin in order to reach and tap the soviet communications in East Germany was a clever and relatively comfortable affair which had its own heating system, since Berlin winters are cold. The first time it snowed, a routine inspection above ground showed, to the inspector's immense dismay, that the snow just above the tunnel was melting because of the heat coming up from underneath. In no time at all a beautiful path was going to appear in the snow going from West to East Berlin which any watchful Vopo couldn't help but notice. He quickly reported what he had seen. The heat was turned off and in short order refrigeration devices were installed in the tunnel. Fortunately, it continued to snow and the path was quickly covered over. In all the complex and detailed planning that had gone into the design of this tunnel, it was something no one had anticipated. It was a near mishap in one of the most valuable and daring projects

ever undertaken. Most intelligence operations have a limited span of usefulness—a tunnel, a U-2, and the like. This is assumed when the project starts. The difficult decisions are when to taper off and when to stop.

The soviets eventually did discover the Berlin communications tunnel and subsequently turned the East Berlin end of it into a public exhibit as proof to the East Germans of the long-advertised soviet contention that the allies only wanted to hold West Berlin because it was a convenient springboard for spying on the east. The soviets set up an open-

*Continued*



*"We were swamped with what we began to call 'uranium salesmen.'"*

air beer-and-sausage stand near the spot so that the German burghers with their families could make a Sunday afternoon outing of their visit to the tunnel. This backfired, however, since the reaction of the visitors and the public in general was quite different from what the soviets expected and wanted. Instead of shaking their fists at the west, the Germans got a good laugh at the soviets because somebody had finally put something over on them and they were silly enough to boast of it. The beer-and-sausage establishment was dismantled shortly afterward.

### **Trouble Communicating**

There is no single field of intelligence work in which accidental mishap is more frequent or more frustrating than in communications. The Bolsheviks, like Doctor Bancroft, Franklin's secretary, used to prefer the hollow of a tree. Today there are safer and more devious contrivances by which means papers can be protected against weather and soil for long periods of time. In one case the material was actually buried in the ground at a spot near the side of a road that had been used before successfully and was generally unfrequented day and night. On the occasion in question the site was clear when the message was put into the ground but when the agent came some days later to retrieve it, he found a mountain of dirt on top of it. In the short space of time between the placement and the arrival of the agent, the highway authorities had decided to

widen the road and had begun to do so.

For obvious reasons intelligence operations will often make use of public toilets as a place to cache messages. In some countries they are about the only places where anyone can be sure of being absolutely alone. Even in such a place luck can run against you. In one instance the cleaning staff decided to convert one of the booths into a makeshift closet for brooms, mops, and buckets and they put a lock on the door. This was naturally the booth in which the message was hidden and the conversation took place between the placing of the message and the arrival of the agent to retrieve it.

One of the simplest and oldest of all dodges used by intelligence in making arrangements for meeting calls for adding or subtracting days and hours from the time stipulated in a phone conversation or other message, just in case the enemy intercepts such a message. The agent has been told, let us say, to add one day and subtract two hours. Tuesday at 11 really means Wednesday at 9. When the agent was first dispatched, he knew this as well as his own name. No need to write it down in any form. Three months later, however, when he gets his first message calling him to a meeting, panic suddenly seizes him. Was it plus one day and minus two hours or was it minus one day and plus two hours? Or was it perhaps plus two days and minus one hour? Or was it . . . and so on. This is of course a very simple instance and hardly an example of the complex arrangements often in force.

Misunderstandings or forgetting of complex arrangements can lead to a delightful comedy of errors, especially when each party to a meeting or other arrangement tries to second guess the other.

### **Strictly Propaganda**

One of the greatest sources of mischief for western intelligence and diplomacy are the soviet forgeries which I have already mentioned. Next in line I would rank the scurrilous propaganda which the soviets manufacture, pretending to expose the personnel and methods of our intelligence services. To the perceptive westerner these are generally funny, but their outlandishness is not likely to be perceived by the audience for whom they are intended. In their attempts to discredit American intelligence, the soviets have produced for consumption behind the iron curtain and in neutral areas no end of books, pamphlets, press articles, and radio programs branding our intelligence service as vicious, reactionary, and war mongering, and its officers, including its director, as gangsters and war criminals.

Such material is usually on the level of the lowest kind of war propaganda and revels in trumped-up stories and doctored pictures of atrocities. They have claimed that we torture people and have shown pictures of the instruments we use. More of such material has appeared in East Germany than elsewhere because the territory of East Germany has been most vulnerable to western intelligence, and the soviets rightly fear it and are anxious to frighten the East Germans away from any entanglements with the nefarious west.

One such work, published [in German] in East Berlin in 1959, is called "Allen's Gangsters in Action." On its purple and yellow cover, it shows a partially unclad damsel who is wired with microphones and tape recorders and a miniature transmitter and antenna, all of which one would not see if she were fully clothed. Its general accuracy is attested to by the fact that it gives the address of CIA as "24 E-Street, Washington/N. Y." As anyone could have found out by consulting the Washington phone book, the old number was 2430 E, and, as we all know, the state of New York has not yet gobbled up the city of Washington.

Quite another kind of mischief-maker are the intelligence fabricators and swindlers. Among these there is the agent whose real sources dry up and who is therefore threatened with being put out of business. He knows what kind

Continued

of information the intelligence service wants and he has its confidence. If he has no other means of livelihood and is not basically honest, it is understandable that he might come upon the idea of keeping such sources alive and functioning by writing their reports himself and fabricating their contents. Sooner or later the intelligence service will catch on, probably on the basis of internal evidence—errors in fact, discrepancies, an obvious paucity of hard dates, a certain amount of embroidery that wasn't there before, even errors in style.

Immediately after World War II the most popular swindle by all odds exploited the new and world-wide interest in atomic energy. We were swamped with what we began to call "uranium salesmen." In all the capitals of Europe they turned up with "samples" of U-235 and U-238 in tin canisters or wrapped in cotton and stuffed into pill bottles. Sometimes they offered to sell us large quantities of the precious stuff. Sometimes they said their samples came from the newly opened uranium mines of Czechoslovakia, where they had excellent sources who could keep us supplied with the latest research behind the iron curtain. There were many variations on the theme of uranium.

Cranks and crackpots run a close second after the fabricators as mischief-makers and time-wasters for the intelligence service. The reader would be amazed to know how many psychopaths and people with grudges and pet foibles and phobias manage to make connections with intelligence services all over the world and to tie them in knots, if only for relatively short periods of time. Again the intelligence service is vulnerable because of its standing need for information and because of the unpredictability of the quarter from which it might come.

Paranoia is by far the biggest cause of trouble. Since espionage is now in the atmosphere, it is no wonder that persons with paranoid tendencies who have been disappointed in love or in business or



*"He was seen . . . making notes. . . ."*

who just don't like their neighbors will denounce their friends and foes and competitors, or even the local garbage man, as soviet spies. During World War I, many German governesses employed by families on Long Island were denounced at one time or another and mostly for the same reason. They were seen raising and lowering their window shades at night, secretly signaling to German submarines which had surfaced offshore. Just what kind of significant information they could pass on to a submarine by lowering their shades once or twice was usually unclear, but then it is typical of paranoid delusions that there is a "bad man" close by, altho it is never quite certain what he wants.

Trained intelligence officers can frequently spot the crank by just this trait. There is usually very little positive substance to the crank's claim. The waiter at the "Esplanade" is spying for an iron curtain country. He was seen surreptitiously making notes in a corner after he had just taken overly long to serve two persons who are employed in a government office. [He was probably adding up their bill.] It may later turn out that he had once accidentally spilled soup on the source, who was convinced he had done it on purpose. ■